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ABSTRACT

In late 1969, Glassboro State College initiated a VISTA volunteer program as a further extension of the community service commitment evidenced by its yearly admission of students from disadvantaged groups on special Martin Luther King Scholarships. Although any Glassboro student (most of whom are education majors) may volunteer for the program, only those whose family income meets New Jersey OEO poverty index criteria receive the $46.00 weekly stipend. The program is divided into a summer phase and a winter phase. During the summer the VISTA volunteer works full-time in the community and participates in a VISTA-related college course, receiving 6 semester hours of credit. During the winter the VISTA volunteer takes 9-12 semester hours of regular college classes and works in the community for the remainder of the time. He receives six credits for the VISTA work. The volunteers live in the community and serve with local community organizations. Some immediate results from the program have been the introduction of a public service elective for academic behavioral science majors, and expansion of community involvement in field experience for teacher trainees. VISTA volunteers have also provided feedback to the college on the relevance of their education. (RT)

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GLASSBORO STATE COLLEGE
GLASSBORO, NEW JERSEY

OVERVIEW OF THE GLASSBORO VISTA STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

WHAT DOES A VISTA DO?

In America today, it is clear that there exists a great need for various kinds of social change. The college student is in a unique position to become an important part of this movement towards the development of a better society. As a VISTA, the student works in a community to assist the community residents in dealing with those problems with which the residents are coming to grips. The VISTA student volunteer acts in concert with the community residents to implement the kinds of social change being called for in our society today.

HOW DOES THE GLASSBORO PROGRAM WORK?

Summer Phase

The VISTA volunteer works full-time in the community and participates in a VISTA related college course which will give him credit towards his degree.

The VISTA field experience for this phase, with its in-service training component, is worth three semester hours of credit towards a B.A. degree.

Winter Phase

The student VISTA attends regularly scheduled college classes three days a week (for 9-12 semester hour credits) and works in the community for the remainder of the time. The VISTA field experience for this phase (September - June), with its in-service training component, is worth six semester hours.

WHERE DO VISTAS LIVE?

In the community in which they are working. In most cases, this is the VISTA's own hometown but not in his original neighborhood.

HOW MUCH DO VISTAS EARN?

The stipend VISTAS receive to cover the cost of food and lodging in the community in which they are working is approximately $46.00 per week.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE GLASSBORO VISTA STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

With its operation of a VISTA student volunteer program, Glassboro State College is unique in the nation. This program permits a college student to continue his academic growth, while experiencing important inputs from the community to which some day he will bring to bear his learnings. In a very direct way, we are extending to the community at large, the primary resources of the college, the student. With careful consideration being given to in-service training and seminar group discussions, the program is directing itself towards relating an empirical community experience to the scholarly materials available within the disciplines of Sociology, Urbanology, Political Science, etc.

The college student is in an unique position to become an important part of this movement towards the development of a better society. As a VISTA, the student works in a community to assist the community residents in dealing with those problems with which they are coming to grips. The VISTA student volunteer acts in concert with the community residents to implement the kinds of social change being called for in our society today.

The program operates with two distinct phases; a summer and a winter phase. During the summer, the student volunteer is immersed full time as a community resident in a community service. He has experienced a two-week training session geared to orient him to his new role and he is experiencing an ongoing seminar learning workshop. The VISTA field experience for this phase is worth three semester hours of credit, making the summer experience worth six semester hours of degree related credit.

The Winter Phase is somewhat different. Although the volunteer continues to live in the community in which he is working, he is enrolled as a student at the college, continuing with his required undergraduate course of study. Taking nine semester hours of work on the campus, arranged so as to necessitate being on campus for three days per week, and taking three semester hours of work in an extension course related to his field

experience the VISTA student volunteer continues his academic growth.

As with all VISTA Programs, Glassboro volunteers are placed in community organizations which operate ongoing programs attempting to effect change in the problematic conditions existing in their areas. The major efforts of these agencies, all of which are non-profit, may be geared towards planning, coordination of services, direct action, or any combination of these.

Specifically, the organizations within which the Glassboro VISTAs operate have been selected on the basis of community and staff evaluation of their effectiveness and competencies, as well as upon the ability and willingness of one individual in the organization to assume responsibility for the VISTA's experience. The role of the individual who serves as the agency contact person has been defined by the VISTA staff as that of day-to-day direction-giver; the responsibility for ongoing supervision and explication of the interrelatedness between academic and field experience has been assumed by Glassboro VISTA staff.

The program currently is operating in several distinct geographic areas: Camden, Atlantic City, Vineland, Salem, Bridgeton, Glassboro, Berlin, and Elsmere. The organizations within which the VISTAs are functioning are as follows:

Camden City

1. Urban Education Center
2. Camden County O.E.O. (North Center)
3. Sixth Street Recreation Project
4. Poets Row Project
5. B.P.U.M. Economic Development Center

Atlantic City

1. Human Relations Commission
2. Uptown Community Service Center - Stlantic Human Resources
3. Education Council of Concerned Parents

Vineland Area

1. Vineland Day Care Center
2. Neighborhood Improvement Association
3. Bridgeton Day Care Center
4. S.C.O.P.E. Offices
   (a) Bridgeton Office
   (b) Glassboro Office
   (c) Woodbury Office
5. Elsmere Welfare Rights Organization
6. American Friends Service Committee (CRASH Survey Program)

As can be seen, the community affiliations developed thus far have placed a heavy emphasis on direct-service, community based citizen organization. In addition to these organizations, the VISTAs themselves have established a Community Black Cultural Center in Salem, and have begun important tutorial programs in Camden, Atlantic City, Elsmere, Vineland and Glassboro. The following is a cross section of the kinds of activities in which the VISTAs have become involved:

1. A community based remedial reading program has been established in Camden in cooperation with the college and Camden community groups.

2. A business management training course for community residents has been undertaken in Camden with the assistance of three area colleges.

3. Several extensive community needs surveys have been taken in the areas of nutrition, public housing, public education and community action programming.

The recruitment of volunteers is made from the overall college student body. One important criteria is that the volunteers come from families whose income falls below the Federal Poverty O.E.O. guidelines. Other students may be involved, but without remuneration. All applicants undergo an intensive screening process which has been established to determine the applicants' readiness and ability to function as community service volunteers.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Specifically, the overall objectives of the VISTA Program have been defined as follows:

1. To develop new channels for the resource and expertise of the college to be made available to the poverty community.

2. To confirm the viability of structured field service for incorporation into an academic public service curriculum.

3. To provide interested students with a program relating the practicalities of community service with the theory and rationale of social science.

4. To provide low income students with the opportunity for service to their own communities.

5. To demonstrate a new concept in the use of Community Volunteers, combining field service with a formal academic program leading to a professional degree.

6. To demonstrate the effectiveness of part-time Student Volunteers in the performance of traditional VISTA roles in the poverty community.

7. To demonstrate the effectiveness of part-time Student Volunteers in a structured program with adequate supervision.

An operationalization of these objectives at the level of the student volunteer ascribes for him the following action modalities:

1. Involve the poor in anti-poverty programs.

2. Identify needs and goals with the poverty community.

3. Provide assistance in community organization efforts.

4. Develop new channels of communication within the poverty community.

5. Promote the expansion and comprehensions of programs such as housing, social services, public education, etc.

6. Facilitate the involvement of the college resources and expertise in support of anti-poverty programs.

7. Provide direct input to college faculty and administration as to their perception of the interrelatedness of the college curriculum and the skills they find necessary to function as effective citizens in their communities.

PERSONNEL INVOLVED

The issue of selection of staff personnel for this program was in itself an important step towards community involvement in the college's decision making machinery. Staff were recommended by the Human Resources Committee (Appendix) to a committee made up of college faculty, administrators and community people who made the final determination. Four staff people were hired, three as area coordinators, one as overall director of the program. Two of them are working towards their B.A. degree, two possess Master's degrees. Throughout the entire process, the input from the community was an important factor in determining who was to be employed.

It is perceived by the program staff, however, that effecting change within the college is dependent upon involvement of all college departments and staff; therefore, many avenues are being developed for involvement of non-program staff. Several of the college departments have already been involved in programs both for the community people being served, and the VISTA student volunteers themselves. The college President and

Vice President for Academic Affairs are themselves involved in providing assistance to the student volunteers.

BUDGET

The initial budget provided for the following items at the designated rates.

Salaries (staff)	$54,625.00	
Secretary	4,500.00	
Staff travel	3,000.00	
VISTA stipends	$102,000.00	60 volunteers x $37.50 week x 50 weeks
VISTA travel	$17,669.00	

However, upon execution of the program, it was determined by volunteers and staff that these stipends would be inadequate based upon the experiences of operating the program for its first six weeks. On this basis, was prepared a report for the VISTA Federal Office, requesting an amendment to the budget. The request was granted, volunteer stipends were increased to $46.00 per week increasing the volunteer stipend budget category to $132,020.00.

The cost of additional support materials, office supplies and miscellaneous expenditures is being provided by the college in the nature of in-kind contributions.

CONTRIBUTION TO TEACHER EDUCATION

The real import of the VISTA-Student Program rests on assumptions about the needs of this society in this world. In a world placing greater stress on cooperation, mutuality, sharing and brotherhood, the institutions of an individualistic-materialistic mode are increasingly subject to question and modification. Such modes and their adjustment, with other technological and population changes needed, will confront us with future lifetimes of ceaseless moral-ethical decisions. For our people to meet and enjoy this future, they must be vital, courageous, intelligent, and compassionate, and their education must help them to experience the nature and value of these characteristics. This is what the VISTA-Student tries to do - to help the poor to believe in themselves, to set their own goals and priorities, and to work effectively to achieve these goals. As he does so, the VISTA-Student gains especially from a sense of identification and

brotherhood with people in the nation and world who hope for a more peaceful, equitable, and fraternal life.

Enrollment in the VISTA Program is open to students regardless of curricula. However, insofar as the majority of students at Glassboro State College are pursuing studies toward becoming teachers, the program is expected to have an important overall experience on teacher education.

Now translated simply into, "What's different about this VISTA-Student field experience - different from other field experiences?" Clearly, the program is distinctive because: (1) It focuses exclusively on the poor, (2) It operates for the most part outside of predetermined programs of structured institutions, (3) Its social goal is improvement and, necessarily, change, (4) It judges achievement by how the persons working with the VISTA-Student have come to feel about themselves and their well-being, and (5) It enlists service in a formal nation-wide approach to social improvement.

Significant as the VISTA-Student Program has become in the lives of students and citizens involved, equally significant impetus has been given to other college and community programs supportive of teacher education; few examples may suffice. VISTA-Student Program directly encouraged: (1) Introduction of a public service elective for all students. (2) Emphasis on field experience in "academic" majors in the behavioral sciences. (3) Expansion of community involvement in field experience in teacher education, such as Practicum and Student Teaching. (4) Creation of an urban center for college involvement in inner city educational-recreational-cultural planning, tutorial service, and social services. (5) Greater sharing of the human and material resources of the college and the region.

But fully as important, the impact on our college students generally has caused them to feel a fresh breeze of vitality, courage, and brotherhood, and social responsibility. In short, the college seems to be practicing what it preaches.

EVALUATION

An evaluation of this program must take into consideration the following components: (1) Program objectives, (2) Community field placements, (3) Staffing patterns, and

(4) Budgetary needs.

The program has been operating for only five months and the full impact cannot be determined at this time; however, some outcomes are clearly discernable. For the volunteers, the learning experience has been an important one. They are developing a greater ability to identify alternative courses of action for the communities, and more clearly identify and localize community needs and resources. They are more able to identify the kinds of educational experiences they feel to be valid and relevant to the tasks they must perform as citizens involved in working towards a better community for all. They are succeeding in getting other college students and faculty sensitized and interested in taking action towards alleviating some of the social injustices to which many in our society are subjected.

Through their placements in community organizations, VISTAs are becoming aware of the possibilities and limitations for social change. Some of the students have identified a need for creating parallel operating organizations, some have come to believe they will be able to bring about necessary social change through the existing structures, and some have reached a point of utter frustration and disenchantment with their organization's ability to move in the direction of greater humanization of society.

We find our staffing pattern quite viable. Although early in the program there was some uncertainty as to the interrelationships of the program area coordinator and the community organization contact person, the delineation of responsibility and assumption of supervisory functions has been executed smoothly. We see a great need for additional technical expertise to be provided in the ongoing seminar experiences of the VISTA Student Volunteers, and have actively involved the college art, communications, social science, philosophy, physical education departments as well as various community "experts" in the fields of consumer education, public law, etc. in providing the additional technical expertise identified as essential by both VISTAs and staff. In addition, provisions have been made to provide experiences for the VISTAs themselves to develop specific areas of expertise. They have become involved in other organiza-

tions' training programs on housing, welfare, consumer education and other areas identified as important by them.

At this point in the program, the total number of dollars appropriated in relation to the size of the program seems to be adequate. In terms of budgetary line items, however, revisions are in the process at being made in the negotiation of next year's contract with the VISTA National Office to be able to provide additional services to the VISTA Student Volunteers.

APPENDIX

GLASSBORO STATE COLLEGE
VISTA STUDENT VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

APPENDIX

I. BACKGROUND OF VISTA PROGRAM

In September 1968, Glassboro State College admitted 79 Freshmen on a special Martin Luther King Scholarship Program. The students were recruited through a variety of community contacts as well as admitted from the college's Upward Bound Program. Of the group, only about five would have been eligible under standard admission criteria, but they have done so well that it is estimated that almost all will be able to finish a four year B.A. degree program. The great majority are Black, with about 10 Spanish-speaking and white students. The average age is between 19 and 20.

In the spring of 1968, the college called a conference of community leaders, anti-poverty workers, faculty and students to discuss ways in which the college could become more involved. From this group grew an informal but permanent Human Resources Committee of about 75 persons who provide continuing advice and assistance to the college on community programs. When state and federal funds became available for the King Scholar Program in 1968-69, the Human Resources Committee members were able to assist the college in recruiting several hundred applicants in a few short weeks in order to meet funding deadlines. In the spring of 1969, members of the Committee screened and interviewed over 300 applicants for the September 1969 program, prior to a second interview and a final decision by the college. This committee composed of 33 Blacks, 40 whites, and 2 Spanish-speaking members was responsible in part, for the initiation of the VISTA Program. This seeming to be a logical extension of an approach to community problems which was to extend the college into its community to begin approaching this resolution.

With the combination of input from this Human Resources Committee and other forces for educational change, Glassboro State College has responded by setting a target date of September 1970 to institute new majors in fields such as sociology, public administration, political science, urban studies, and public communication. An eventual goal is an inter-departmental major in public service which would have an extensive field work component. The VISTA-related proposal described below has been a major

step in demonstrating the viability of such a combined academic and field work curriculum in an undergraduate program.

II. SPECIFICS OF VOLUNTEER SELECTION PROCESS

The recruitment and selection procedure for the students to become involved in this program can be outlined as follows:

A. Recruitment

The college recruited participants for this program from the Glassboro student body. In the 1969-70 program, all participants are students in the sophomore or junior class of the college. They are either:

1. Students enrolled in the Martin Luther King Scholarship Program.
2. Other low-income students recommended by the college.

B. Selection Criteria

1. King Scholars--participants from the Martin Luther King Scholarship Program were individually recommended by the Director of the King Scholar Program.
2. Other students--participants who are not King Scholars were recruited from the student body according to the following qualifications:
   a. A family income meeting New Jersey O.E.O. poverty index criteria, and;
   b. A letter of recommendation from a Glassboro faculty member with whom the student is well acquainted.

C. All Participants--all students recruited have met the following qualifications:

1. A level of maturity and stability that would permit them to effectively perform community service.
2. A level of academic achievement that would permit them to perform community services without impairment of their academic standing, as determined by the college.
3. A commitment to community service.
4. An ability to meet VISTA standards for community volunteers.

D. The college has also involved other non-disadvantaged students on a completely voluntary basis with no financial remuneration.